



INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Thank you for involving your 7th and 8th grade students in the 2006 *Do the Write Thing* Challenge. All across America, students like yours are rising to the challenge of doing something to end youth violence. The *Do the Write Thing* Challenge gives middle school students an opportunity to examine the impact of youth violence on their lives and, in written form, to communicate what they think should be done to change our culture of violence.

Personal responsibility is emphasized. By encouraging students to make personal commitments to do something about the problem, the program ultimately seeks to give them the opportunity to break the cycles of violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Your involvement and support are crucial to the success of the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge in Utah.

Please review the following materials concerning program rules, entry deadlines, judging criteria, classroom discussion, and student recognition before presenting the program to your students.

Program Rules

The following guidelines for the preparation of student writings have been distributed to all participating principals and teachers.

- Students may use any form of written expression (e.g. essays, poems, plays or songs), as long as the language is positive and not derogatory. Students may submit only one entry per year. Each entry must be the work product of only one student.
- Student entries, at minimum, should address three questions: How has violence affected my life? What are the causes of youth violence? What can I do about youth violence?
- Entries should be approximately 500 to 1000 words in length. Written forms of expression such as poetry, that by their nature may be shorter, may contain fewer than 500 words.
- Entries must be typed or written legibly in black ink on 8-1/2" x 11" paper. Only one side of the paper may be used and the pages should be numbered. Please paper clip, do not staple.
- Entries must be in English.
- If the student participant uses a quotation or another person's materials in his or her entry, the entry must identify whose work being used by citing the person's name and/or citing the source of the material. Writings based upon plagiarism will not be advanced in the judging process.
- Entries must have a Cover Sheet with the **consent statement signed by the participating student and a parent or guardian. No personal information should appear on the body of the written entry.**

- Entries without a signed Cover Sheet will not be advanced in the judging process. (See attached Cover Sheet with the Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement.)
- Entries must be submitted in the form that they are received from the student writer. Editing for content, grammar or spelling by someone other than the student is not permitted.
- ***Entries must be submitted with one photocopy of the writing.***

Submission Deadlines

Due to the volume of entries expected, each teacher is asked to identify and submit only the top boy and girl writing from each participating classroom. Please **paper clip the Teacher Survey to your classroom entries** and note the total number of students in your classes that participated in the Challenge.

These top writings, along with attached Cover Sheets, should be submitted to your school principal by no later than 3:00 pm on **Monday, January 23, 2006**.

All principals must submit their school's entries to the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice no later than 5:00 pm on **Monday, January 30, 2006**. The address is:

Utah Board of Juvenile Justice
State Capitol Complex
East Office Building, Suite E330
PO Box 142330
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2330.

Judging Criteria

Entries will be judged by Utah's *Do the Write Thing* Committee. Last year the committee included Third District Juvenile Court Judge Andrew Valdez, members of the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice, Utah's First Lady Mary Kaye Huntsman, Allie Mac Kay from KUTV and others. Entries will be judged on the basis of content, originality and responsiveness to the three questions:

How has youth violence affected my life?
What are the causes of youth violence?
What can I do about youth violence?

Grammar and spelling will not be used as criteria for judging entries.

In their writings, students should be encouraged to describe what they feel are the causes of youth violence and offer specific suggestions about what they as individuals can do to reduce youth violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Personal responsibility for responding to the problem of youth violence should be emphasized. *Students should be encouraged to share personal experiences about the impact of youth violence on their lives and the lives of their peers.* The panel of judges will be looking at how well your students present their views on these matters and scoring will be based on the following criteria:

Category 1	Question Responsiveness (0 – 25 points)
Category 2	Originality (0 – 30 points)
Category 3	Content (0 – 45 points)

Classroom Discussion

Classroom discussion is not mandatory for participation in the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge. However, over the years we have found that participating students and their teachers gain much from the connections that can result from exchanges about the impact of youth violence that occur in pre-writing classroom discussions. Teachers have indicated that they are amazed at the openness and honesty of the classroom discussions. They also indicate that these discussions present excellent opportunities to identify and prevent youth problems before they reach crisis proportions.

Many of the teachers whose classes have participated in the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge in the past have invited speakers knowledgeable about youth violence issues to lead pre-writing discussions. Other teachers have provided their students with selected readings or newspaper articles about youth violence in advance of the discussion to stimulate thought. Speakers or articles, which emphasize personal responsibility on the part of students for responding to the problems of youth violence, have proven to be particularly useful.

On the **National Campaign to Stop Violence** website at www.dtw.org you can find the National Campaign to Stop Violence's 2002 Discussion Paper on the Causes of and Solutions for Youth Violence. The Discussion Paper is based upon the writings of National Finalists from 2000 – the boy and girl from each of our 20 participating jurisdictions who submitted the most thought provoking entry. Feel free to download and copy this material for your class.

It may be helpful to view Utah's 2005 State Finalists. In order to do so, go to www.juvenile.utah.gov and click on "Do the Write Thing Utah Winners Book 2005."

Below are some questions designed to generate discussion among your students before they prepare their entries for the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge.

Questions to Consider:

- How does youth violence affect your daily life?
- Where are you confronted with youth violence? Your home? Your school? Your neighborhood?
- What are some of the causes of youth violence in your community?
- What can you as an individual do to reduce youth violence in your community?

STUDENT RECOGNITION

Local Level:

Every participating school must select a boy and girl from each participating classroom that completed the most outstanding entry. The writings of these classroom winners should be forwarded to the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice for statewide competition. From these entries, the Board will select 12 finalists to be forwarded for VIP judging.

State Level:

The Utah Board of Juvenile Justice will host a recognition ceremony in late April to honor the 12 State Finalists. In addition to the twelve finalists, students' parents, teachers and principals will be invited to attend the recognition ceremony.

Two "National Finalists" will be announced at this recognition ceremony. The *Do the Write Thing* VIP Judges will select the boy and girl from Utah who submit the most thought provoking entries.

The Board will also publish the writing of all finalists and distribute the publication to area community, business and governmental leaders as well as the national *Do the Write Thing Campaign*.

National Level:

The two National Finalists along with each student's teacher and one parent or guardian will be invited by the **National Campaign to Stop Violence** to attend the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge National Recognition Week in Washington, DC in July.

Our primary sponsor, the Kuwait-America Foundation and/or funding generated by the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice, will pay travel costs for each jurisdiction's "official delegation" to the National Recognition Week activities.

During July of 2005, National Finalists met with the Secretary of the Department of Education, the Deputy Attorney General and with Members of Congress to discuss the problem of youth violence. The students were honored at an embassy reception hosted by the Ambassador of the United States from the State of Kuwait and a book of their writings was placed in the Library of Congress. At the National Recognition Ceremony in the Senate Caucus Room on Capitol Hill, last year's National Finalists read excerpts of their writings to a gathering of national leaders including key Senators and Representatives.

Teacher Survey

*Please complete the enclosed one page teacher survey, which provides the **National Campaign to Stop Violence** with information and statistics needed to administer the **Do the Write Thing** Challenge.*